

The Last Dying Words, Speech, and Genuine Confession of Three Malefactors, who were executed at Tyburn, near York, on Saturday the 13th of April, 1793.

Harvard
College
Library.

Oct. 31, 1906

Minot fund

THE crimes for which the undernamed malefactors have this day suffered, will appear of so serious a nature as to have justly called for the Legislative interference; and though the feeling mind must truly lament the necessity of their untimely dissolution, yet the wise and well-established laws of our excellent constitution, ever vigilant in affording equal protection to the property of all its members, cannot, will not suffer its violators to pass with impunity, when unequivocal proofs of their guilt are ascertained. We shall commence this melancholy narrative with

WILLIAM ATKINSON

Was convicted of aiding, abetting, and counselling a number of persons who had riotously assembled for the purpose of demolishing and pulling down the dwelling-house of John Cooper, of Whitby, Shoemaker.

By the execution of this culprit, we may learn a very useful and important lesson, when we reflect on the circumstances which brought him to his fatal end. It is true, his hands did not assist in the destructive scene, but his tongue (which is the publisher of our inmost sentiments) was ready to applaud the deed, and utter phrases of encouragement, as thus: "Well done, lads!—Down with it—There it goes." These dangerous expressions were positively asserted upon his trial. However, the following is the substance of his confession, from which the reader may draw his own conclusions. "I was born at Whitby, and served my apprenticeship to a carpenter, which profession I have ever since followed. "I confess that, when I first went from home that evening, I had no ill intentions, but went for the purpose of seeing if my sons were in the riot, and, if there, to take them out of harm's way. I absolutely declare that I was a street's length from Cooper's house, and never opened my mouth either to encourage or approve what the mob was doing. "I am totally innocent, as I hope to meet God in mercy; but I cannot help fretting to think I should live to this time of day, and be hanged at last. I believe that some of my relations were in the mob, tho' I did not see them. I have no malice to the Constables who seized me, but I must let the world know that they dragged me from my poor habitation, and, as the *real* offenders could not be secured, it has now so happened that I must suffer for others, having done nothing myself to merit so shameful a death."—Atkinson was 70 years of age, and, after the sermon, a letter was read to him by the Rev. Mr. Richardson, the purport of which was, That no mercy could be extended to him on this side the grave, especially as the ferment of the times more particularly pointed to the melancholy and awful necessity.

RICHARD WATSON

Was a Bookbinder, about 30 years of age, and was convicted of a burglary in the dwelling-house of John Ambler, of Halifax, and carrying away from his premises a variety of articles to a considerable amount.

"I confess that I was really guilty of the crime for which I am condemned to die a shameful and ignominious death; but at the same time I most solemnly declare that it was necessity alone that prompted me to commit so atrocious a deed, which has caused me to leave a virtuous, loving, and affectionate wife, with her helpless infants, to lament the loss of a husband and father. I now resign my soul to God, in whom I hope to meet forgiveness, as I trust, at the same time, that the liberal hand of Charity will be extended towards my poor little orphans."

THOMAS JEWETT

Was convicted of stealing 13 heifers, the property of several persons resident in the parish of the city of York.

A crime of such magnitude as this is seldom to be met with, and the audacity which the malefactor discovered in disposing of the property was equally as rare. He drove the beasts from the fields whence he had stolen them to the very first market or fair which offered, and was as singularly detected; for a person observing him in possession of so much stock, signified his surprize to the purchaser, and advised him not to pay for the beasts, without some inquiry for whom he was selling them. Conscience accused; he contrived means to escape; the next day, however, he was pursued, and taken.

He has behaved very penitently, and confessed that several matters of a serious nature have been kindly forgiven, without exposing his character, in hopes that amendment would follow such indulgence. He was about 40 years of age, and has left a wife and four children.

A most excellent and applicable discourse was preached in the Chapel yesterday to Atkinson and Watson, by the Rev. James Richardson, from the following text: "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," Luke xxiii. 42.

The concluding part of the Clergyman's discourse was delivered with a truly Christian concern for his unhappy fellow-creatures, and the general exhortation was marked with every expression of tender regard for all his hearers.

They were conveyed to the place of execution amidst a very great concourse of people, and at the awful place of dissolution they behaved in a manner perfectly suitable to their peculiar situations.

HANNAH HOBSON, convicted of being concerned in the riot at Whitby, is reprieved. She was in the chapel during some part of the service, but was taken out, in consequence of being seized with strong hysteric fits, to which she has been repeatedly subject since the sentence of death was passed upon her.